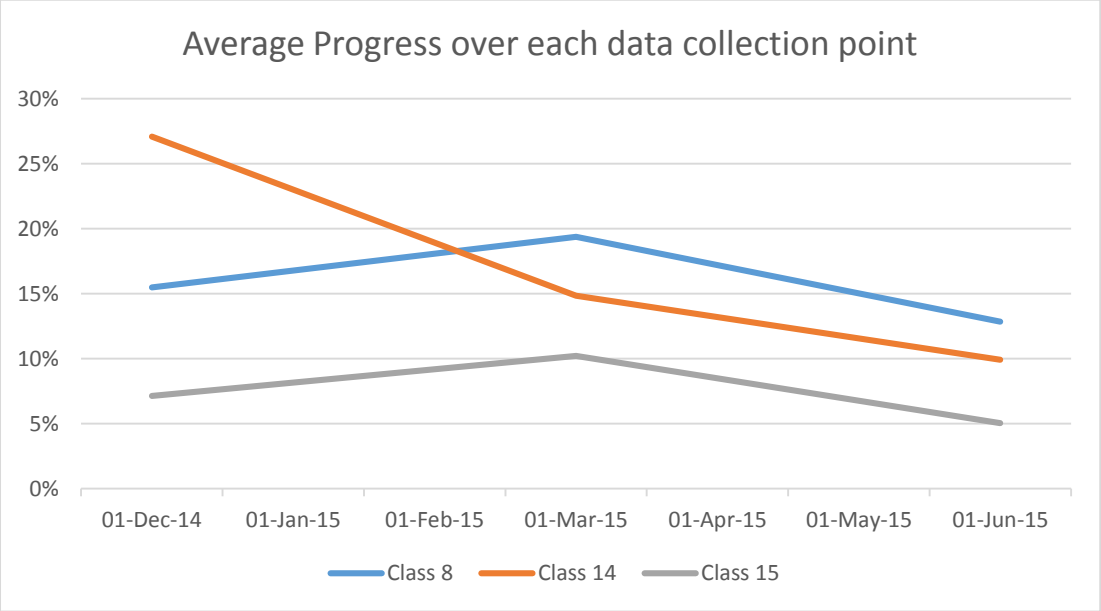
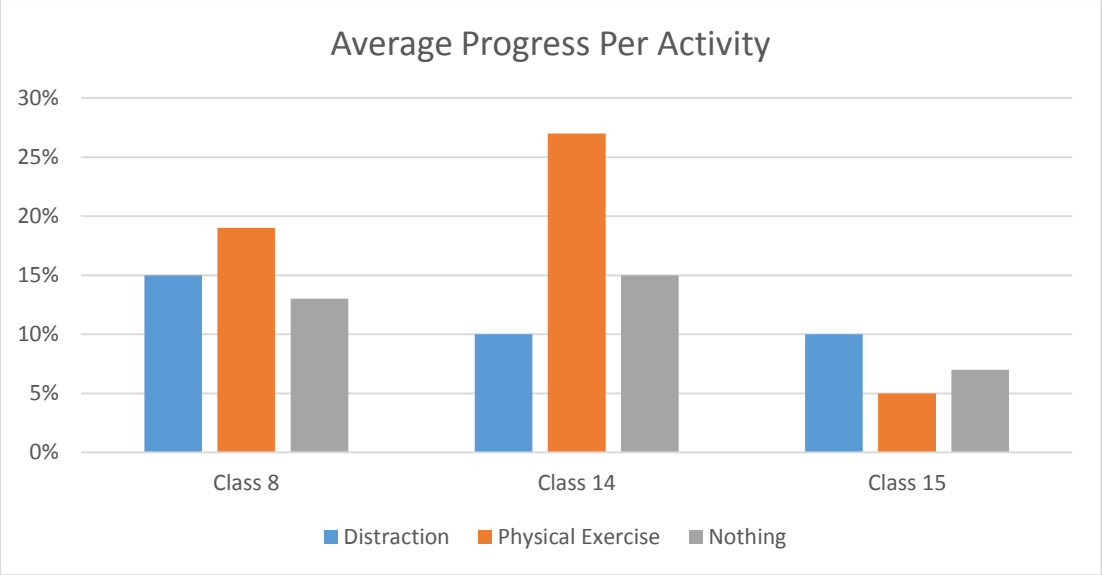
Closing the Gap Analysis

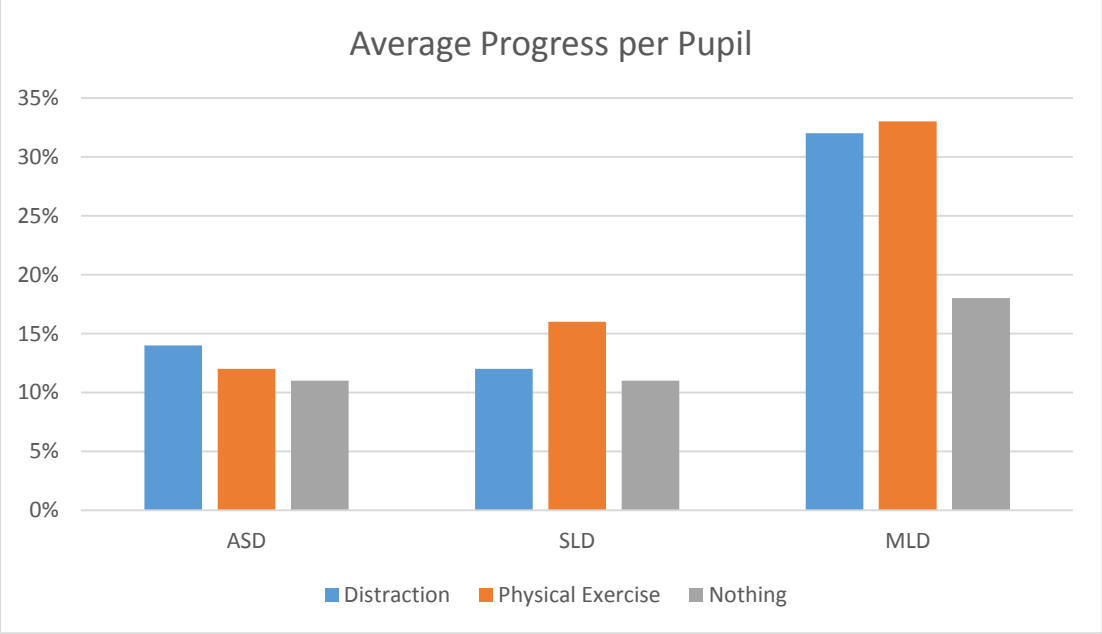
Over the course of the academic year 2014-15 three classes from the Orchard school took part in a project aimed at investigating the potential factors inhibiting or improving progress for our pupils. The project was co-ordinated by the Deputy Head Teacher, who determined that the areas of focus would be 'distraction', 'physical activity' with a control period with each class doing nothing. Each class took part in one activity between set dates in line with the schools data collection policy. These dates ran from 29th September – 15th December, 15th December – 16th March and from 16th March – 5th June. The classes participated in different activities using a caracul system whereby each class were involved in different activities in each data collection period as demonstrated in the graph below. The class teachers and the Deputy Head Teacher met to decide how each class would manage the way in which we conducted the activities and we concluded that each activity should be short and easily accessible to all the pupils. To that end we decided that the distraction exercise should be to listen and take part to 'head, shoulders, knees and toes', while the physical activity would be marching (with a weighted back pack) to 'the grand old Duke of York'. Each activity was to last for no longer than 5 minutes and took part at 10 and 2 each day.



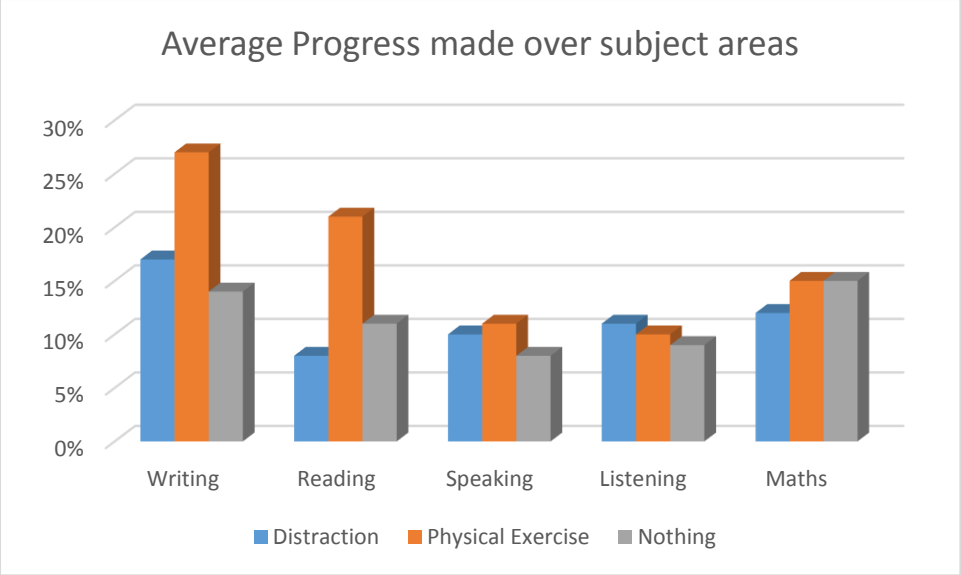
For the most part physical activity had a much better effect on the rate of progress as opposed to nothing or distraction, as graph two demonstrates. It is worth noting here however that the child in class 14 made 321% progress in the data collection period in which the physical progress took place. This rapid increase due to a reassessment of his levels by the class staff, has increased the average percentage that pupils made during this period. However disregarding this anomaly would see that Class 14's 'physical exercise' activity was still the most successful, but reducing how much by. Similarly, in Class 15, the child made greater than expected progress during his classes' 'nothing' part of the project due to his class reassessing his levels. This of course has led to the 'nothing' average progress being higher for class 15.



When looking at the average progress made per pupil based on their SEND it was clear that either physical exercise or distraction had a much better effect on pupil's rate of progress than doing nothing. The MLD group had such a small sample size that I think it doesn't give a fair reflection in terms of % made but I firmly believe when seen in conjunction with SLD and ASD groups it gives further proof that distraction and physical exercise has beneficial effect on rate of learning.



Finally when looking at the average rate of progress made per subject during each phase of the project it is again evident that physical exercise and distraction have had a positive impact. I think the effect on maths would need much closer scrutiny in that not all of the pupils are working in all three strands which could alter the average progress made. Likewise in writing there are a number of pupils who have made much higher than expected progress. These have made the average higher during the physical exercise portion of the project, explaining why it so much higher than the other values.



Through the course of the project I believe that the classes involved have shown that physical exercise and distraction activities have an important role to play in increasing the rate of progress of the pupils in Orchard School.